

Dr. John Zibell, PhD, MFA

Todmorden, GB
+44 747 255 3051
jzibell@ucdavis.edu

Scholar/practitioner researching and training in cinema as embodied practice, director and conservatory-trained actor

Current position: Lecturer in Film Production, The University of Salford, GB

EDUCATION

PhD in Performance Studies, UC Davis

Dissertation Advisers: Dr. Lynette Hunter and Dr. Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli

Completion: December 9, 2018

2009-2011 MFA in Directing, Department of Theatre and Dance, UC Davis

1991-1993 The New Actors Workshop, Professional Acting Conservatory, New York

1984-1988 BA in English/Communications double major, University of Connecticut

SELECTED FILMMAKING EXPERIENCE

Films (Feature Length)

Sex & Violence (2001, MiniDV)

Wrote, Directed, and Edited award-winning independent feature film shot on location in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Winner Best Directorial Debut and Audience Award at New York International Indie Film Festival. Also acted in the film.

Laughing River (1998, 16mm)

Wrote, Directed, and Acted in independent feature film shot on location in Connecticut. Also supervised post-production.

Films (Shorts, Docs, Industrials)

Ohta's Elements in Bogota. Directed, Wrote, Shot, and Edited short documentary film on the 2017 UC Davis production of Shogo Ohta's play *Elements* for the Bogota production of the play in 2018. Internally funded by UC Davis and connected to (Re)Sounding Bodies: A Research Symposium held in Davis.

Traditional Movement for Relieving Psychological Stress Among Immigrants. Directed short documentary for Interdisciplinary Frontiers for the Humanities and the Arts (IFHA) on a trans-cultural program using traditional Taoist movement practices to promote wellness among Vietnamese-American elders in Sacramento, CA. IFHA funded. For the American Medical Association Website.

Classroom in Motion. Directed, shot, and edited short documentary for the Rhode Island Socio-Economic Development Corporation for Southeast Asians (SEDC) around the effects of English as a Second Language Classes in refugee communities in Providence, Rhode Island.

Series of short industrials for Arlington Plating Company in Palatine, Illinois. Directed, Wrote, Shot, and Edited the films.

PRACTICE AS RESEARCH (PaR) FILMS, INSTALLATIONS, AND PERFORMANCES

Untitled 2019 Film (with Dr. Alex Lichtenfels). Short film created as part of collaborative Devising Film Workshop at UC Davis.

Elements by Shogo Ota (director, Peter Lichtenfels) UC Davis April 2017, Bogotá, Colombia Sept 2018. Theatrical work developed from script and video score (from a performance directed by Ota in Japan) to “translate” cross-cultural body practices and rhetorics for international audiences. Resulted in “Technicity” article.

Eye, Camera, Rhizome. A short PaR film and performance lecture for symposium on visual cultures titled Visual Practices: Practice as Research in Film, Video and Intermedial Visual Arts. Internally funded by the Performance Studies Graduate Group, UC Davis.

Victim Capital (with Dr. Alex Lichtenfels). Short film created as part of collaborative Devising Film Workshop at Greenwich University.

Glitch-body & Nanostalgia. A week-long collaboration with internationally acclaimed Performance Artist (and avowed technophobe) Guillermo Gómez-Peña that confronted bodies trained in divergent performance disciplines with Google Glass and live-streaming technologies. Funding by the Davis Humanities Innovation Lab, Mellon Research Initiative in Digital Cultures, Interdisciplinary Frontiers in the Humanities and the Arts (IFHA) Cluster on Gamification, and the UC Davis ModLab. April 2015.

Plastic Rose – Edinburgh Fringe 2014. Conceived and directed video projections for Shogo Ohta’s play directed by Peter Lichtenfels. Also developed and devised Google Glass live-feed installation.

Scoring Beckett (conceived, devised, directed) a multimedia, mixed-reality performance project developed in collaboration with a company of players including computer scientist Oliver Kreylos, developer of the immersive virtual reality environment, the UC Davis KeckCAVES. The project uses four distinct VR spaces in the same performance space to examine presence and exhaustion in the works of *Samuel Beckett*. The performers and researchers in *Scoring Beckett* used motion capture devices, 3D imaging technology, and visualization tools designed for creation and manipulation of large data sets to reveal alternative ways of reading (and performing) Beckett. Spring 2014

Galatea, projection design, choreography (directed by Peter Lichtenfels). For John Lyly’s *Elizabethan*, gender non-conforming comedy images from three live feed cameras were projected on massive screens continuously for the entire running time of the show – often live actors played off projections

of themselves as other characters. I trained the cast (of 30) in camera operation and together we choreographed hundreds of camera moves. I also developed movement scores for the bodies playing in and out of the three frames. (Also GSR on the project – see below) Winter 2013.

Membrane. Dance film with choreographer Nita Little. Director, cinematography, collaborated on the script/score with Little.

Corpo Illicito: The Post-Human Society 6.9. SOMArts, San Francisco. With Guillermo Gómez-Peña and his company La Pocha Nostra. Collaborated on a week-long workshop with La Pocha Nostra to develop a Multi- and Mixed-media performance installation.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Issue: Co-editor with Dr. Alex Lichtenfels and Heather Nolan

Copresence with the Camera, to be published in *Performance Matters* May/June 2020. Edited collection of peer-reviewed articles and interviews on Practice as Research in cinema.

“Action with Camera: Making the Future Audience Present” (with Heather Nolan). *Performance Matters*, Vol 6. No1, June 2020. Also, co-editor of the special issue, *Copresence with the Camera*. <https://performancematters-thejournal.com/index.php/pm/article/view/263>

“Technicity’s “lure”: Pulling theatre technology into process in a production of Shogo Ota’s *Elements*” (with Dr. Lynette Hunter and Peter Lichtenfels). Under consideration at *International Theatre Research*.

CONFERENCES (PRESENTER)

“No-Motion as *bodied* Method.” **Performance Studies Graduate Student Symposium: Methods, Making & Madness**, UC Davis, October 2018.

“Eye, Camera, Rhizome” in collaboration with Heather Nolan. Developed and presented multiple times over a series of colloquia titled *Co-presence with Camera* held at UC Davis between April 2016 and the present.

“The Appropriated: Beckett and Critical Training.” **Performance Studies Graduate Student Symposium: Practicing Bodies, Performing Ecologies**, UC Davis, October 2015

“Scoring Beckett: Emergence, Exhaustion, and Event.” **DHI Studies in Performance and Practice Research Cluster Symposium: The Art of Appropriation**. March 2014

“Present Formulation Part One: Ghost and Trace in Beckett’s ‘Footfalls.’” **PFS Graduate Student Symposium: Praxis, Performance, Document**, UC Davis, October 2013

“Haunt: Dance for 3 bodies and 2 cameras,” (with Emelie Mahdavian and Kevin O’Connor). **PFS Graduate Student Symposium: Praxis, Performance, Document**, UC Davis October 2013. PaR devised dance performance involving two improvising camera operators (one of whom is a trained dancer) covering one choreographed minute of dance repeated 15 times.

“Passion for the Real.” **Performance and Social Change Symposium**, UC Davis Performance Studies, December 2011

“Me Generation: Body Cartographies” PaR performance. **Interdisciplinary Graduate Professional Symposium**, UC Davis, April 2011

CONFERENCES (ORGANIZER)

Co-Organizer

PFS Graduate Student Symposium: Methods, Making, & Madness, October 2018

Co-wrote call for papers, programmed, and coordinated logistics for this 2-day, annual UC Davis symposium for graduate students and affiliated faculty.

Graduate Organizer (with Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli)

The Art of Appropriation, March 2014

Two day academic conference at UC Davis, funded by Davis Humanities Institute Studies in Performance and Practice as Research Cluster and The Center for Science and Innovation Studies. The conference brought together legal scholars with visual media scholars and practitioners to discuss the relevance of appropriation to public culture and the arts.

Co-Organizer

PFS Graduate Student Symposium: Praxis, Performance, Document, October 2013

Co-wrote call for papers, programmed panel discussions, curated performances and films, and coordinated logistics.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of California, Davis – Departments of Cinema and Digital Media, Technoculture Studies, Theatre and Dance, and Film Studies 2010 – present

ASSOCIATE INSTRUCTOR (AI)

Foundations of Filmmaking, Summer 2019

Introductory undergraduate lower division film/media making course focusing on the craft, techniques, and processes around camera, sound, and lighting. Special focus on collaboration within a single-camera work flow.

Epic Television: Another “Golden Age” of TV?, Spring 2019. Upper division undergraduate course focusing on key critical debates in post-broadcast television studies. Students trained in close-reading and “thick description” for written critical analysis directed toward serial TV forms and their cultural implications.

Understanding Performance: *Contemporary Theatre, Dance, Film and Performance Art*, Fall 2013, '17, '18

Developed PaR course with Dr. Lynette Hunter. Assembled games, exercises, and flip activities to engage embodied practices of knowledge-making through performance in various media and genres. Strong focus on trans-cultural media and performance.

Theatre, Performance and Culture, Spring 2018

Introductory survey course with strong PaR component exploring methods and practices for performance in various settings and media.

Acting For Camera, Winter 2016 – upper division, cross-disciplinary course taught in conjunction with *Small-Scale Film Production* (below).

Taught film craft and industry practices to directors and actors – modifying (at the level of scripting, shooting, and editing) for skeleton crews. Trained directors and actors in industrial work-flows – actors train to think like directors and vice versa for collaboration across disciplinary boundaries.

Acting for Non-majors, taught and co-taught 5 times 2009 – 2018

Taught scene study and close-reading of scripts for various media – focused on TV, Film, and Theatre. Used improvisation and devising practices to introduce students to acting as an embodied interrogation of social and cultural forms.

Media/Theatre, Winter 2013 and Spring 2014

Upper division undergraduate course that I redesigned to focus on media-production as embodied practice for those behind and in front of the camera. Students produced three mixed-media performance pieces from script to final presentation. Workflows involved design/scripting, capture, edit, and often projection design.

Advanced Acting Intensive (Realism), Summer 2009

Upper division course practicing with Stanislavski's Physical Action, a later development of his which is largely left out of US translations of his work.

Advanced Acting Intensive (Non-Realism), Summer 2009

Upper division course on "physical theatre" built on Jerzy Grotowski's plastiques and various US devising practices.

GRADUATE INSTRUCTOR / TEACHING ASSISTANT (TA)

Small-Scale Film Production (with Keith Wilson), Winter 2016.

Taught collaboration, industry practices and production workflows to upper division undergraduate cinematographers, directors, and actors.

Media/Theatre (with Prof. Ellen Bromberg), Spring 2013.

Upper division course focusing on projection mapping for dance and non-realist theatrical productions and performance art.

Introduction to Film (with Prof. Sheldon Lu), Winter 2013.

Introductory survey course on contemporary world cinema.

Theatre, Performance and Culture (with Prof. Jon Rossini), Fall 2012

Introductory survey course exploring methods and practices for performance in various settings and media.

Technoculture and the Popular Imagination (with Prof. Kriss Ravetto-Biagioli), Fall 2012

Introductory course tracing AI and biotechnology through the scientific imaginary – from 19th century Romanticism to the present.

Principles of Directing (with Susannah Martin), Winter 2011

Introduction to directing for the theatre with a focus on staging, scene analysis, and composition.

Principles of Directing, Acting for Camera (with Prof. Sarah Pia Anderson), Spring 2010

Upper division and MFA course that puts actors behind and in front of the camera to train in production processes from story boarding to picture lock and basic sound editing.

WORKSHOPS and other teaching/ training experience

Yolo-Foster and Kinship Care: Media workshops for youth and young adults living with foster families or in group homes. Focuses on the self-portrait, critical making practices, and media fluency. Funded by University of California Humanities Research Initiative, Yolo County Health and Human Services, and Performance Studies UC Davis. July 2018-Ongoing.

Devising Workshop (Film): *Greenwich University, London.* Collaborative workshop for actors and filmmakers. Draws on embodied theatrical devising strategies and the flexibility of digital tech to foster better conversations between filmmakers and actors. With Dr. Alex Lichtenfels. Resulted in the short film, *Victim Capital*. January 2018-Ongoing

Home School Devising/Theatrical Workshop: Developed and conduct weekly theatre, collaboration, and story-telling workshops with home school students ages 7-17. Space donated by Performance Studies, UC Davis. 2017-Ongoing.

Unstories I and II: Collaborated with a company of artist/scholars using Affective Devising, a research, writing, and theatrical methodology developed by anthropologist Cristiana Giordano and Theatre Director Greg Pierotti to engage, in embodied ways, with field notes, interviews, and other anthropological or ethnographic materials. 2016-Ongoing.

Professional Acting Coach New York City: Coached Actor and Pulitzer-Prize-Winning Playwright Ayad Akhtar during preparation/shooting for his leading role in the Indie Spirit Award Nominated film *The War Within*. 2005

Beginning Improvisation New Actors' Workshop, New York City

Introduction to the improvisation training of Viola Spolin, Keith Johnstone, Del Close and others for professional actors. 1994-1996

Theatre Games for Young Players, Blue Circle Theatre Co.

Taught Viola Spolin's Theatre Games to children ages 7-12 with Spolin's son, director Paul Sills – Door County, WI 1993

GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS (GSR)

UC Davis, Department of Theatre and Dance, Fall 2009. Research assistant to visiting Granada Artist Guillermo Gomez-Pena. Assistant director on *Corpo Ilicito: The Post-Human Society 6.9*. Designed workshops and rehearsals, collaborated on the performance score.

UC Davis, Department of Theatre and Dance, Winter 2010. Research assistant to Professor Peter Lichtenfels. Assisted the director in researching the text of John Lyly's *Gallathea* and relevant dramaturgical elements for performance on the UC Davis Main Stage which ran Fall 2011. Also designed projections and performance scores for use with three live-feed cameras.

AWARDS

Granada Award For Teaching Excellence and Dedication to Students, Department of Theatre and Dance, UC Davis, 2011

Best Directorial Debut, NY International Indie Film and Video Festival for *Sex & Violence*

Audience Award, NY International Indie Film and Video Festival for *Sex & Violence*

FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

University of California Humanities Research Institute (UCHRI) Emerging Humanities Grant, for media workshops with Yolo-county Foster Care Youth. Lynette Hunter, PI. 2018

Provost Dissertation Year Fellowship, UC Davis, 2015

Margrit Mondavi Summer Research Fellowship, UC Davis – to fund research into performances with camera drones. Summer 2015.

Interdisciplinary Frontiers in the Humanities and Arts (IFHA) Cluster on Gamification Fellow, UC Davis. Academic Year 2014.

Mellon Research Initiative in Digital Cultures Summer Fellowship, UC Davis – to fund PaR work on *Scoring Beckett*. Summer 2014

UC Davis, Performance Studies Graduate Group, PFS Graduate Fellowship, 2011-2018